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Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A multifunctional encapsulated biologically active spherical structure according to Claim 21 for human ingestion consisting of a core which comprises at least one dietary fiber, which core is surrounded by at least one biologically active substance, in which the core and the biologically active substance(s) are encapsulated on all sides by surrounding said core and biologically active substance(s) on all sides with wherein said one or more shell-forming substance(s) is selected from the group consisting of one or more of the following substances: monosaccharides, disaccharides, polysaccharides, emulsifiers, peptides, proteins and prebiotic substances.
2. (Currently Amended) The spherical structure as claimed in claim 4 21, wherein the dietary fiber is selected from the group consisting of plant fibers, water-insoluble polysaccharides, water-soluble polysaccharides, pectins, lignin and plant gums.
3. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 3.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently Amended) The spherical structure as claimed in claim 4 21, wherein the dietary fiber is selected from the group consisting of one or more of the

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following substances: plant fibers, water-insoluble celluloses, water-insoluble hemicelluloses, water-soluble polysaccharides, pectins, lignins and plant gums.

6. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 6.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~spherical~~ structure as claimed in claim 4 21, which has a spherical or polygonal shape having a mean diameter, in the unprocessed state, of from about 1 μ m to about 200 μ m.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~spherical~~ structure as claimed in claim 4 21, wherein the ~~core content of the food component~~ is from about 10 to about 90% by weight.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~spherical~~ structure as claimed in claim 4 21, wherein the content of the biologically active substance ~~in the food component~~ is from < 1% by weight to > 50% by weight.

10. (Currently Amended) The ~~spherical~~ structure as claimed in claim 4 21, wherein the content of shell materials in the food component is \leq 50% by weight.

11. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 11.

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~spherical~~ structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polysaccharides are selected from the group consisting of hydrolyzed starches, microbial polysaccharides, plant polysaccharides, acidic plant gums, pectins and celluloses.

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13. (Currently Amended) The spherical structure as claimed in claim 2, wherein the plant fiber is selected from the group consisting of wheat fibers, apple fibers and oat fibers.

14. (Currently Amended) The spherical structure as claimed in claim 2, wherein the water-insoluble polysaccharides are celluloses.

15. (Currently Amended) The spherical structure as claimed in claim 5, wherein the plant fibers are selected from the group consisting of wheat fibers, oat fibers, rice dietary fibers, apple fibers and citrus fibers.

16. (Currently Amended) The spherical structure as claimed in claim 5, wherein the water-soluble polysaccharides are selected from the group consisting of β -glucans, fructo-oligosaccharides and galactooligosaccharides.

17. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 17.

18. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 18.

19. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 19.

20. (Cancelled) Please cancel Claim 20.

21. (Currently Amended) A multifunctional encapsulated biologically active structure according to Claim 20 consisting of a core comprising at least one dietary fiber, said core surrounded by at least one biologically active substance, said core and biologically active substance(s) surrounded on all sides by one or more shell-forming substance(s), said shell-forming substance(s) forming stable complexes with at least one of either the core or the biologically active substances, wherein said biologically

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active substance(s) are microorganisms.

22. (Previously Presented) A multifunctional encapsulated biologically active structure according to Claim 21, wherein said microorganisms have a cell density of greater than 1×10^9 per ml CFU.

23. (Previously Presented) A multifunctional encapsulated biologically active structure according to Claim 21, wherein said microorganisms are cultured within a fermentation medium and said shell-forming substances further comprise at least one component derived from the fermentation medium.

24. (Previously Presented) A multifunctional encapsulated biologically active structure according to Claim 21, further comprising at least one of either an energy source or growth promoter for said microorganisms.

25. (Currently Amended) A multifunctional encapsulated biologically active structure according to Claim 20 21, wherein said shell-forming substance comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of gum Arabic, gelatin, pectin, maltodextrin, and carboxymethyl cellulose.